

## HARVESTING AND CURING

Harvesting is really far-out. After months of hard undercover work, you are finally about to reap the benefits which will keep your head in the coming months.

Unless you have to make a fast getaway, the plants should not be harvested until they have reached maturity, for at this point the plant has reached its maximum potency. When do the plants mature? How long does it take? Before these questions can be answered, you must have an understanding of a few technical concepts.

Like animals and people, plants must grow to a certain stage before they reach maturity and can reproduce. For many plants, the regulating factor to reach maturity is the number of hours of daily light which the plant receives. This daily light cycle is called PHOTOPERIODISM. Concerning photoperiodism, there are three general classes of plants: Short-day, Long-day, and Neutral photoperiod plants. The female marihuana plant is a short-day photoperiod plant and the male is a neutral photoperiod plant.

The female short-day plant will not reach maturity and start to develop flowers unless the length of daily light exposure is decreasing to a point where it is receiving not more than 13-14 hours of light per day (Short Days). If your crop is indoors, a female plant can be brought to maturity in as little as 36 days. We have grown female plants 15" high—full of seeds and resin—which were only a little over one month old. How is this possible? You merely have to "psych-out" the plant. Remember that she is a short-day plant and the only time in nature when the days are getting shorter is when winter is approaching. As soon as she senses that the length of daily light is getting shorter, she probably thinks, "Holy shit!! Winter must be coming so I'd better get it on and make a few seeds so that there will be some marihuana next year." So if you are giving the plants 18 hours

of light per day, and you cut it back to 10-13 hours per day, the female will flower in about two weeks. If you keep the light at 18 hours per day, the females will grow indefinitely and probably never reach maturity and flower. If your crop is outside, the females will start to mature sometime between late summer and early fall depending on your geographic location.

The neutral photoperiodic male plants are a different story. Being neutral, they are not affected by the amount of light they receive as long as it is the minimum 8 hours to survive. The males will mature and flower sometime between 3-5 months depending on the variety of marihuana which you are growing.

As the plant grows, the lower leaves will yellow and fall to the ground. Collect these leaves, since there is a good possibility that they will be potent.

I laugh when I read articles and booklets about how only the top leaves will get you stoned: I flash back to a few summers ago when things were fairly dry, as they seem to get each summer. The crop had been planted in middle April, and it wasn't Memorial Day before we were getting itchy fingers.

The plants were about 1½ feet high and a few lower leaves were beginning to turn yellow. Having read all the books on marihuana farming, I informed everyone that these leaves were worthless for smoking, and could be discarded. My friends were horrified and convinced me that they should at least give them a try. After flash-curing the leaves in the oven, a couple of joints were rolled and everyone got ripped. From that point on the plants never had a chance; every 4-5 days the lower green leaves were picked, flash-cured, and smoked. It was really unbelievable—the stuff didn't look like grass because it was a bright green and smelled like new-mown hay, but there are a few people who will never forget some of those fantastic stone-outs that summer. So I recommend that you save all your leaves and give them the test.

The male plant matures by developing loosely branched flower clusters near the forks of branches and down near the stem of the plant (see center picture). The flower consists of about 5 green-yellow or purplish sepals which open at maturity and shed the yellow stamen pollen. As soon as possible after